

Lane Denies Verifying Cult Funds

Mark Lane, attorney for the People's Temple, last night denied news reports that he had been traveling in Europe verifying the cult's foreign bank accounts for federal investigators and that accounts in Switzerland had been emptied.

CBS News reported last night that Lane and Terry Buford, the cult's former financial manager, had been traveling together for the past week and had verified \$8 million in accounts in Switzerland, Canada and England for federal authorities here.

The CBS report said Ms. Buford, cult leader Jim Jones' agent who traveled abroad to set up the accounts and the foreign corporations in which the money was hidden, will testify about the bank accounts — without immunity — before a federal grand jury next week in San Francisco.

The New York Times reported that a bank in Zurich had informed the Justice Department that the People's Temple assets, estimated to be as much as \$8 million, had been removed. The name of the bank could not be learned.

The report quoted a Justice Department

spokesman as saying Lane and Ms. Buford reportedly had gone to Switzerland to remove the secret Zurich assets.

"It's all lies. Everything is a lie," Lane said. "I was on television in France. That's what my trip was for. The only explanation I can give for these stories is that Inspector Clouseau of the Pink Panther film has been appointed attorney general.

"I went from Memphis to New York to Paris. And Terry was in Memphis the entire time. She never left. They're (the Justice Department and news agencies) publishing lies jointly this time."

Lane was seen in France Wednesday, where he appeared on a television program, but Ms. Buford was not seen with him. He said he had not heard the CBS news report because he was en route to Memphis by plane, where he has made his home since September.

"Terry hasn't left Memphis. And if the Justice Department says I have traveled with her, it is not the agency to investigate the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. . . . or anything else that requires the brain of a 5-year-old. They are obviously incompetent or fools, if not liars.

"They well know that I was traveling for French television. The station sent me the tickets, made accommodations for me in Paris, picked me up at the airport and I was on live TV with an editor of the Washington Post.

"I stayed for a couple of days meeting with various people there. My passport shows that I have been nowhere but there. And Terry's shows that she didn't leave the country. If these fools can't figure that out, they shouldn't be trusted with any single obligation again," Lane said.

He said Ms. Buford told authorities in San Francisco everything she knew about the assets a couple of weeks ago.

"She turned over all the documents she had to them then. It is all fantasy. If they want the facts, they should contact me. I'm right here. It's a very strange country."

Spokesmen for the State Department said earlier the department would attempt to recover millions of dollars in cash and property found at the site of the mass suicide and murder ritual in Guyana to pay the tab for returning the bodies of the 913 American victims.

**** The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Saturday, December 16, 1978.